

Administrative Public Records Requests Policy and Procedures

I. POLICY STATEMENT:

Grays Harbor County District Court shall respond promptly to all administrative records requests. This shall be done in accordance with both the letter and the spirit of the General Rule 31.1 (GR 31.1 Access to Administrative Records) and case law related to the disclosure of administrative judicial records.

A. Public Records Officer

The Court designates the District Court Administrator as its Public Records Officer. The Public Records Officer is responsible for supervising and coordinating the Court's overall public records process in accordance with this policy, and may delegate tasks to appropriate court staff. The Public records Officer may be contacted as follows:

Grays Harbor County District Court
102 W Broadway, Room 202
Montesano, WA 98563
Phone Number 360-249-3441
Fax Number 360-249-6382

Email address: DistrictCourtRecords@co.grays-harbor.wa.us

B. Request for Records. Request for administrative records must be submitted by email, US mail or delivery to District Court.

Mailing Address and Office Location: Grays Harbor County District Court
Public Records Officer
102 W. Broadway, Room 202
Montesano, WA 98563

Email address: DistrictCourtRecords@co.grays-harbor.wa.us

All administrative records request must be directed to the Public Records Office using one of the methods listed above. All records for administrative records must be made on the Administrative Records Request Form.

The person requesting administrative records must provide his or her name and contact information. Requests that omit this information will not be processed. Requests that are made on behalf of an entity or other person must provide all of the following information: the name of the other person or entity, the requestor's name, and the requestor's relationship with the other person or entity.

C. Response to Request

The Public Records Officer or his/her designate shall respond to the requestor within five business days after receiving the request by: (1) providing responsive documents along with a statement of why any documents are exempt from disclosure; (2) providing a date by which responsive documents will be provided; or (3) requesting clarification of the request; (4) detailing any required fees that must be paid for the requested records; or (5) denying the request and an explanation of the denial. The Public Records Officer will make every effort to work with the requestor to clarify the request and to provide responsive documents. Upon request, the Public Records Officer will provide a copy of any public records responses to the organizational unit that participated in providing documents, noting if a protective order precludes disclosure of any documents.

The request will be closed if a response sent by mail or email to the requestor at the address provided in the request is returned or undeliverable and no other contact information has been provided.

Original public records shall not be removed from the District Court, except under the direction of the Public Records Officer.

The Public Records Officer will work with the requestor to determine the appropriate format for providing responsive records. If records are requested with metadata intact, the Public Records Officer will work with the appropriate Information Technology Department (IT) to provide records in native format to the extent possible. If the request is for records that can best be provided through customized access to electronic records, the Public Records Officer shall work with the necessary staff that has responsive documents to determine the appropriate means of response. Records that required redaction or other manipulation may be provided by the formation determined by the court and the corresponding fee may be imposed including time for preparing redacted records.

Fees: The court will charge the requestor a fee of \$30.00 per hour for research time required to locate, obtain, or prepare the records to locate, obtain, or prepare the records for any request taking longer than one hour beginning with the second hour and prorated in 15 minute increments. Additionally, a fee for photocopying or scanning documents will apply as stated below. The payment of estimated copying or production fees may be required by the court before performing any work necessary to produce the records for the requestor. Payment will be accepted by check, money order or credit/debit card.

Standard fees:

Fifty cents (.50) per page for standard (8 1/2 X 11), black and white copies.

Seventy-five cents (.75) for double sided copies.

Ten cents (.10) per page for scanned documents.

Actual postage and shipping costs, including cost of required containers.

D. Closing Withdrawn or Abandoned Public Records Requests. The court may close, as completed, any public records request where the Requester failed to claim or review assembled records within thirty days of notification that the records are available for inspection or copying, or respond within 30 days to a request for clarification or other information needed to process a request.

E. Procedure for Review of Court Response

Any requestor who objects to the response to his or her public record request may seek review by using the following procedure:

1. Internal review

- a. Requests for review must be in writing and submitted on the Request for Review of Records Officer's Decision form. The form must include the requestor's name and address or email address and (1) a copy of the public record request and (2) a copy of the records officer's decision.
- b. Requests for review must be submitted to the Court within 90 days after the response was completed. Requests for review are untimely and will not be considered if they are submitted before the request for records is closed or completed, or if they are submitted more than 90 days after closure or completion of the request.
- c. Internal Reviews will be conducted by the Presiding Judge, or by another judge that the Presiding Judge designates to conduct the review without a hearing.
- d. Internal reviews are administrative in nature and are not a court hearing.
- e. The internal review will be held within five business days of the date the request for review was received if reasonably possible, or, if not reasonable possible, will be scheduled for review within five days for the earliest practical date.

2. External Review

Only after an internal review is conducted, the requester may seek external review under GR 31.1(d) (4). A request for external review must be submitted within 30 days of the issuance of the final decision of the internal review. There are two ways to seek external review.

- a. **Civil Action.** The requester may use a judicial writ of mandamus, prohibition, or certiorari to file a civil action in superior court challenging the records decision.
- b. **Informal Review by Visiting Judge or Other Outside Decision Maker.** The requester may request external for review by a visiting judge in writing.